

RESPONSE
US APPLN. NO. 10/791,987

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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Application of: Montse Llinas-Brunet) Art Unit: 1654
Serial No.: 10/791,987) Examiner: T. Heard
Conf. No.: 4958)
Filed: 03/03/2004
For: Hepatitis C Inhibitor Compound
Docket No.: 13/113

Commissioner for Patents
P. O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

RESPONSE

Sir:

This is in response to the Office Action dated November 16, 2004, setting forth a 1 month period for reply. At page 2 of the office action, the examiner sets forth a restriction requirement in 2 groups:

- I. Claims 1-31, drawn to a composition
- II. Claims 32-38, drawn to a method of use

At page 3, the examiner also requires an election of species.

In response, Applicants herein elect Group I, with compound 105 in Table 1 as the elected species. Claims 1-15, 17, 19, 21-23 and 25-38 read upon this elected species, or its method of use. This election is made with traverse.

Applicants traverse the election of species requirement. Applicants submit that, at the very least, the compounds of formula (I) as depicted in claim 1 constitute a proper Markush Group of compounds as they all share a common substantial structural core and all share a common utility as HCV NS3 protease inhibitors useful for treating HCV infection. Accordingly, Applicants elect a single disclosed species herein on the understanding that this is done only to facilitate

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To: Commissioner for Patents

Date: December 14, 2004

Fax: 703-872-9306

No. of Pages including cover sheet: 3

RE: 13/113

Enclosed is a response to an office action dated November 16, 2004.

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**Thank you,
Linda Boland-Covey**


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initial search and examination, but that this application will be generically examined in according with the USPTO's Markush Practice as outline in MPEP 803.02 in the event that the elected species is found to be patentable.

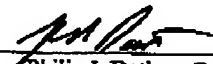
Applicants appreciate the Examiner's acknowledgment (at pg. 4 of the Office Action) that the USPTO's Rejoinder Practice (MPEP 821.04) is applicable to the present application. In the event that the product claims of Group I are found to be allowable, Applicants request that the process (method) claims of Group II be rejoined in the examination under Rejoinder Practice since all these process claims depend from the product claims of Group I.

In view of the above remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that this application is now in condition for early examination. If any points remain at issue which can best be resolved by way of a telephonic or personal interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,


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